The RECONSTRUCTIONIST

VOL. XIV. DECEMBER 24, 1948 KISLEV 22, 5709 No. 17

- *THE MEETING OF THE WESTERN STATES SECTION — NATIONAL JEWISH WELFARE BOARD*
  by Samuel Josolowitz
- *CHRISTMAS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS—A NEW APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM*
  by Abraham Segal
- *A CHRISTMAS LETTER BY A JEW*
  by Immanuel Lewy
- *SONGS OF THE SHEPHERD KING*
  by Helen Joy Weinberg
- *FACING A NEW ERA*
  by Max Weine

Dedicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of Eretz Yisrael, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

is published bi-weekly for twenty consecutive issues, starting in October, by the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, Inc., 15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y. Subscription $3.00 per year; 15¢ per copy; foreign 25¢ extra; membership in the Foundationn, $5.00 per year, including subscription to *The Reconstructionist*. Reentered as second class matter October 3, 1935, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

EDITORIAL BOARD:

Chairman: **Mordecai M. Kaplan**
Associate Chairman: **Ira Eisenstein**
Managing Editor: **Eugene Kohn**
Associate Editors: **Israel S. Chipkin, Jack J. Cohen, Theodore Friedman, Roland B. Gittelsohn, Jacob S. Golub, Emanuel Green, Will Herberg, Aharon Kessler, Immanuel Lewy, Milton Steinberg, Max Wiener.**
Contributing Editors: **Morris Adler, Michael Alper, Bertha Badt-Strauss, Nathan A. Barack, Morton M. Berman, Philip S. Bernstein, Asher Block, Samuel M. Blumenfield, William Boxerman, Ethel Cohen, Mortimer J. Cohen, Lawrence W. Crohn, Samuel Dinin, Judith K. Eisenstein, U. Z. Engelman, Judah I. Goldin, Albert A. Goldman, Robert Gordis, Bernard Heller, Frieda Clark Hyman, Oscar Karbach, Edward Klein, Samuel C. Kohs, Milton Konvitz, Myer S. Kripke, Mark M. Krug, Theodore N. Lewis, David Polish, Lionel Reiss, Edward T. Sandrow, Norman Schanin, Morton Seidenfeld, Frank Trager, Leo Trepp, Max Weine, Bernard Weinryb, Jacob J. Weinstein.**
Executive Secretary: **Hannah L. Goldberg.**

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

SAMUEL JOSOLOWITZ is director of Rural Services, Jewish Center Division of the National Jewish Welfare Board.

ABRAHAM SEGAL is a well-known educator in the Jewish school system of Philadelphia, Pa.

HELEN JOY WEINBERG is actively associated with Jewish communal affairs in Chicago. Her poetry has appeared in several Anglo-Jewish publications.

MAX WEINE is rabbi of Temple Beth Israel, Camden, N. J., and contributing editor to THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST.

NOW READY FOR DISTRIBUTION

"The Religion of the Jewish Prayer Book"
A Study Syllabus

$1.00 per copy
90 cents to members of the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation and in quantities of 10 or more copies.

FOR HANUKKAH GIFTS!

THE RECORD ALBUM
WHAT IS TORAH?

The Eisenstein cantata on two twelve-inch records is the album that should be in every record library!

$4.25 per album, plus postage.

THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN JEW
by
MORDECAI M. KAPLAN

The book with a message for every American Jew interested in creative Jewish living.

$6.00 per copy.

THE JEWISH RECONSTRUCTIONIST FOUNDATION, Inc.,
15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y.

Please send me.....albums of "What Is Torah?" Check for $..... is enclosed.

Please send me.....copies of "The Future of the American Jew." Check for $..... is enclosed.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

The RECONSTRUCTIONIST

Vol. XIV. December 24, 1948 Kislev 22, 5709 No. 17

EDITORIALS

UNFRATERNAL FRATERNITIES

AT Amherst College, the Alpha Chapter of the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity admitted a Negro student to membership. Thereupon the Chapter was suspended from the national fraternity for "unfraternal" conduct. When the entire question of discrimination in college fraternities came up at the National Interfraternity Conference, the action of the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity was upheld, but the delegates voted to consider the problem at greater length next year.

If questioned about their religious views, the members of Phi Kappa Psi would doubtless profess belief in the brotherhood of man. How then can they fail to see the irony of branding a chapter which refuses to practice racial discrimination as "unfraternal"? The fraternity system in our colleges has developed into an elaborate device for preventing the student body from acting in the spirit of that universal fraternalism which transcends differences of race, religion and economic status. It is subversive of democratic principles. It tries to secure a monopoly of all influential positions on the campus for a socially "elite" (collegiate for *Herrenvolk*) and to keep down all who do not "rate." It substitutes for the democratic doctrine of "liberty, equality, fraternity," the undemocratic doctrine of domination, inequality and social snobbery.

A good deal has been written about the sound uses of fraternities. Some of it may be true. It is natural and permissible for large bodies of men to divide into smaller groupings on the basis of personal predilections. The ideal of universal brotherhood does not mean that one must associate on the same terms with every one whom one happens to meet. For like-minded people to want to lodge together or eat together is not inherently reprehensible and is, indeed, from many angles, desirable. But when a group has to be instructed to exclude members for such arbitrary and irrational considerations as the color of their skins, the basis of union is no longer a mutual liking, which is good, but a common hatred and antipathy, which is bad. And it is precisely on the fostering of such antagonisms that the fraternity system thrives.

Whatever good may be found in the fraternities could be maintained and fostered by student associations that are organized for some common religious, cultural or recreational interest and exclude none who share that interest. Such organizations would be educational, whereas societies that make a principle of exclusiveness are miseducational. The whole

idea of a university is its stress on the universality of culture. Associations that work against cultural and spiritual exchange of influences among students on a basis of equality defeat the very purpose of a college education.

Let us not dismiss the silly snobbery of fraternities as just a youthful foible which the student leaves behind him after graduation. The standard of values developed in student days is not so easily shaken off. In an era in which racial and religious conflicts have been sharpened and have led to pogroms and genocide, universities have a great responsibility for promoting right human relations on the campus. Only thus can they train for right human relations in the national community, and between nations. The fraternities themselves should do some serious soul-searching, asking themselves whether they have any place in a democracy, and, if so, what place. The universities should ask themselves whether they have any right to give official recognition to fraternities that disturb the fraternal relations which should prevail among all students. And the churches, dedicated to faith in the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God, should accept their measure of responsibility for discouraging the perpetuation of racial prejudice, religious bigotry and plutocratic class-consciousness among college students.

Recently, the Federal Council of Churches, representing twenty-three Protestant denominations and four Eastern Orthodox groups, adopted a laudable resolution renouncing "the pattern of segregation as unnecessary and undesirable, and a violation of the gospel of love and human brotherhood." Here is an opportunity for the churches affiliated with the Council to perform a service in the spirit of that resolution. Let them call upon the colleges to abolish the present fraternity system, institute common dormitories for all students, and charter only those fraternal groups of clubs which are dedicated to the advancement of a specific and legitimate interest.

MUCK-RAKING IS NOT ENOUGH

NEW York State is in the throes of a muck-raking campaign against the divorce racket. District Attorney Frank S. Hogan has exposed an ugly situation, the existence of which was widely known but more or less deliberately ignored. According to the laws of N. Y. the only ground for divorce is adultery. The result is that, when a couple find that they cannot live together in peace, one of them must either commit adultery or fake adultery with the assistance of hired witnesses who frame a mock raid on the allegedly adulterous couple. The district attorney's office discovered and exposed the racket for producing the faked-up evidence. As a result, the legality of the divorces and, consequently, the validity of the remarriages of a great number of New Yorkers has been called into question. Though the courts will probably not invalidate the second marriages of divorcees, where that would involve the break-up of homes, the mere questioning of the validity of the divorce is enough to cause considerable mental anguish to many happily married couples.

Wether any good will come from the airing of the public scandal in the press depends on whether the public draws the correct inferences from the situation. Mere condemnation of the divorce racketeers is not the appropriate response. The public has no right to be shocked by a situation which flows almost inevitably from the dubious morality of the divorce laws that it has so far lacked

he courage and decency to revise. For a ode that encourages adultery and per- ury by making them the only possible ay of escape from a marriage which has roved a failure is bad, and a public that as seen the evil consequences of that ode without amending it shares in the uilt of the adulterers and perjurers at hose misdeeds it professes to be shocked.

There is obviously need of a more ra- ional divorce law, one that is based whol- y on consideration of the welfare of all he parties most directly affected. But it s exceedingly difficult to obtain such a aw because of the doctrinal position of ome of the churches and the sensitivity f politicians and legislators to the pres- ures of church lobbies. No politician likes o be considered an advocate of immor- lity, yet that is exactly the stigma which ome of the orthodox churches would im- nediately seek to fasten on any prota- onist of more liberal divorce. He would e at once pilloried as a violator of the anctity of the home, which is the very oundation of our social order.

The injustice of such a charge is evi- ent from the experience of the Jewish eople. Jewish divorce was never as re- tricted as Christian divorce, yet the anctity of the Jewish home did not fall nort of that of the Christian home. 'or Jewish religion, in its more realistic utlook on life, perceived that unity and armony in the home cannot be enforced y legislation. It is an oversimplification o assume that the only offense which egrades and destroys the marriage tie is dultery. There are countless ways be- ond the purview of any court in which usband or wife (usually both) may nake a continuance of life together in- olerable. The problem of the stability f the family is not the problem of ivorce; it is not mainly a legal problem t all; it is indeed a complex of psy- hological, ethical, religious, social and economic, as well as legal, problems. The legal interest should be to see that, when a marriage is dissolved after it is apparent that all efforts at conciliation have failed, it is dissolved with a minimum of hurt to all the parties involved.

This view is diametrically opposed to that of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church is now agitating for the abolition of divorce altogether. Its attitude is based on the verse in Matthew 19:6, "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." It regards marriage as a sacrament, a sort of miraculous union and divine dispensation which has to be accepted with all its consequences for good or evil and which must remain forever inviolable. Some Protestant sects permit divorce in the case of adultery, so that the innocent party need not suffer for the offense of the sinful and guilty one, but, fundamentally, the basic conception of marriage as a sacrament is retained. Judaism also holds the marriage tie sacred, but as a *covenant,* not a *sacrament.* It is a human relationship freely entered into, involving solemn obligations to the assumption of which the community is called to witness, and which is celebrated by invoking God's blessing. But the free mutuality of the relationship is of its essence, and when that has ceased to be possible, a dissolution of the marriage may be more moral than its continued enforcement. When its sanctity has been defiled, it cannot be restored by legal sanctions.

To be sure, the problem of divorce is not a simple one. The interests of the husband and wife are not the only ones to be considered, particularly where there are children. Economic readjustments need to be made on some equitable basis. This gives the state a legitimate interest in regulating divorce. We have no ready solution to offer in the nature of a model divorce law. What we would like to see

as the outcome of the exposé of the present rotten situation, is the appointment by the Bar Association or some other civic body, of a commission of persons who have had experience and professional training for dealing with problems of marital adjustments as pastors, as social workers, as psychologists, as legal counselors and in other capacities. The commission should study the problem from all angles and devise legislation that will encourage the stability of the marriage tie and provide, in cases where the marriage is nevertheless a failure, for the salvaging of as much human happiness as can be salvaged from its wreckage.

HINDU PROGRESS AND THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

IT is indicative of our warped sense of values that one of mankind's most important social developments, the freeing of India's Untouchables, has received such scant publicity. The Indian Constituent Assembly has included a provision in the Constitution of India which states, "Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. Enforcement of any disability arising out of Untouchability shall be a punishable offense in accordance with the law." Over fifty million human beings have been freed by law from a fate worse than slavery; yet the event has aroused only a ripple of interest.

The Untouchables—or pariahs—were, until now, excluded from schools, from homes and from almost all sources of livelihood other than those considered most menial and degrading. They were even barred from walking on certain streets. All contact between Untouchables and caste Hindus was strictly forbidden. Outright slavery could not produce greater misery, because the slave owner, for his own self-interest, must provide his slaves with a minimum of support. Even that meagre measure of economic security was denied the Untouchables.

The *Christian Century* asserts that the abolition of Untouchability was largely a device to prevent wholesale conversion to Christianity. If this is so, is it not a challenge to the basic conception of Christian missionizing? If the purpose of missionizing is to raise the ethical level of Eastern culture, has not this aim been partially achieved in India? Why, then, does the *Christian Century* say that, "This development may slow down the work of Christian missions. . . . "? Obviously this observation means that the purpose of missionary activity is more than that of raising the moral level. If, on the other hand, its purpose is to save souls through conversion to Christian doctrine and membership in the church, why does the *Christian Century* go on to say that the Assembly's act "will be welcomed by all Christians regardless"? If conversion to Christianity is indispensable to salvation, and if the goal of adding to India's more than six million Christians will now be hindered, why should Christians welcome this important ethical advance? That is the dilemma inherent in all missionary activity.

The truth is that the Assembly's action, as well as Gandhi's prior advocacy of the Untouchables' cause was probably motivated by the sincere acceptance by Hindu leadership of Western concepts of man and human rights. This ought to teach us something about the power of ideas and how they can be adapted to the life of different groups. Gandhi saw no reason why what was universally valid in Western moral and social thought could not be used to strengthen Hindu society. If the West would help the East lift itself by its own bootstraps, let it take heart from the emancipation of the Untouchables. If, however, it would save

the soul of the East through conversion to Christianity, then what has happened in India offers little hope for future missionizing. Is it not time that Christianity reassess its conception of its mission to conform to the truth that all religions are potentially ways of salvation. Their universal values are communicable. They have no need to make converts.

The abandonment of Untouchability is a tribute to the late Mahatma Gandhi and his followers, who, despite their resentment of Western exploitation of India, were appreciative of the universally valid standards of Western ethics. The step may well be a greater monument to the memory of Gandhi than even the attainment of Indian independence, another goal for which he struggled. The cause of national freedom must always be judged by what freedom does to the national spirit. If this new law is effectively infused into Indian society so that Indian life will really be transformed, then the Western world may feel that it has partially atoned for the harsh treatment to which its representatives had subjected India for so many years.

REALITIES AND VALUES

WE WISH TO JOIN THE MANY who are paying tribute to Professor Louis Ginzberg of the Jewish Theological Seminary on the 75th anniversary of his birth. His unflagging devotion to the cause of Jewish learning has enabled him to make contributions to Jewish scholarship which cast light on all branches of our traditional literature—on the talmud and midrash, on the codes and responsa, on the Gaonic literature, on the apocrypha and the literature of Jewish mysticism. His analysis of the *halakah* has provided the social background for an understanding of its evolution, and of the real issues which are concealed behind the pros and cons of legal argument. His contributions to Jewish learning are not such as win the plaudits of the crowd (something he never sought), but they will assure him the admiration of many generations of Jewish scholars who will find in his works guidance and assistance in their efforts to reconstruct the meaning of Jewish history.

▼

CHRISMAS IS A TIME WHEN the Christian world is reminded of the religious obligation to express "good will to men" by acts of charity. Sometimes the fact that Christians are moved by their religion to perform such acts makes them imagine that charity is a specifically Christian virtue and forget that it is a virtue equally enjoined by other faiths.

Perhaps the editor of the *New York Times* had that in mind when he headed his annual pre-Christmas appeal for the neediest cases with a quotation from Maimonides' code.

Whether that was his motive or not, the quotation is apt and merits being publicized. It reads:

"Anticipate charity by preventing poverty. Assist the reduced fellow man either by a considerable gift, or a sum of money, or by teaching him a trade . . . so that he may earn an honest livelihood . . . this is the highest step and the summit of charity's golden ladder."

▼

IT IS FREQENTLY ASSUMED that all orthodoxies remain static and only liberal movements change with the times. That is incorrect. The relation between liberal and orthodox movements is more or less a constant but the actual position of both shows progressive adjustment.

For example, though there was a time when Jewish orthodoxy condemned the teaching of Torah to girls, in many of

our Orthodox schools today, not only are girls taught but women are teachers.

A most recent instance of Orthodox progress is the approval by the New Haven Orthodox Rabbinate of a *Bat Mitzvah* ceremony for girls, analogous to the *Bar Mitzvah* for boys. The ritual, as described by the *National Jewish Post* in its issue of December 10, includes the chanting of some of the *Torah* and *Haftarah* blessings, the reading in Hebrew and English of selected portions of *Haftorah* and a short address on the meaning of the ceremony.

▼

WHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD IS there a labor movement such as one finds in Israel? It is reported that, as of last October, the membership of the Histadrut, the Israeli labor federation, amounted to 193,985 or forty-three per cent of the entire adult population.

The reason, of course, is that the Histadrut is more than a mere movement for improving the lot of the Jewish worker in his relation to his employer. It is a cooperative movement to mobilize Jewish labor in behalf of all those causes that are of vital concern to the Jewish worker not only as a worker but also as a Jew and as a human being. It includes a whole net-work of social, cultural and economic institutions through which a great part of the life of the Yishuv flows. It has engaged in immigrant aid, colonization, education, defense, health work. In the transition period, from the time that Great Britain repudiated its obligations under the Mandate by arbitrarily limiting Jewish land purchase and immigration, to the establishment of the State, it performed quasi-governmental functions, though on a voluntarist basis.

What its future will be now that the State has been established remains to be seen. We may be sure, however, that it will continue to function vigorously and will exemplify the high standard of achievement which is possible for labor when functioning as a voluntarist cooperative movement.

▼

THE ESTABLISHMENT of Israel as an independent State will not only mean revolutionary changes in the life of its Jewish population but also, and perhaps even to a greater degree in that of its Arab population.

An augury of these changes is to be seen in a recent announcement of the Israeli Education Department carried in a Palcor dispatch, dated December 10. Seventeen more schools will be opened shortly in Arab villages, bringing the total number opened so far to 32. The curriculum remains the same as under the Mandate, except for the teaching of Hebrew, but, owing to the teacher shortage, *coeducation has been introduced for the first time.*

▼

THE CALIFORNIA SUPREME Court has struck an important blow against racial prejudice in that state. It voided a law forbidding the marriage of Whites to those of Negro, Mongolian or Malayan blood.

The court declared that "marriage is something more than a civil contract subject to regulation by the state. It is a fundamental right of free men," and that the right to marry is the right to free choice of the person one marries.

The Meeting of the Western States Section—National Jewish Welfare Board*

By SAMUEL JOSOLOWITZ

THE Annual Meeting of the Western States Region of the National Jewish Welfare Board was a history-making event. As the initial experience in the history of the Jewish Community of the West, and as one of the few instances of its kind, three important agencies of Jewish life—the Synagogue, the Jewish School and the Center—joined in a challenging cooperative approach to explore relations in general and common goals in particular. As expressed in the preliminary announcement by Frank H. Sloss of San Francisco, chairman of the Program Committee, "We shall try an experiment. That experiment shall be in the direction of bringing together the forces making for the preservation and strengthening of American Jewish life, which forces in the past have been increasingly moving away from each other." Supplementing this statement Irvin Stalmaster of Los Angeles, president of the Western States Region—JWB said, "It will be an outstanding meeting for the following reasons. For the first time those closely attached either to the Synagogue, Talmud Torah, or the Jewish Center will come together to discuss their common objectives, their common needs, and how each can strengthen the other. Second, never before has there been a Western States Conference concerned with 'The Aims of American Jewish Life' which will receive the kind of questioning and discussion planned for the meeting. Third, Western Jewry has come of age; it is time for it to take hold of its reins and develop new patterns of relationship in American Jewish life on which the Jews in the East have so sorely failed."

The tone and purpose anticipated by Mr. Sloss and Judge Stalmaster were clearly in evidence throughout the meeting. In the first instance it was sponsored by the rabbinical leadership of the West Coast, the Western States Region of the American Association of Jewish Education as well as by the Western States Section—JWB. One of the distinctive characteristics of the meeting was the participation of a cross-section of communal leadership from the Synagogue, the School and the Jewish Center. In the second, the vision and faith of the prominent Jews selected to plan the meeting were fully justified by the findings and results. In the third, the searching probing attitude of those who attended, approximately 200 lay and professional men and women from Phoenix, Ariz., through California, Oregon, Washington, to Vancouver, B. C., provided a climate of objectivity and mutual trust making for a frank exchange of experience and opinion towards resolving the problems of disunity between the three great functional institutions. And in the fourth, the interpretations and proposals from representatives of each interest toward achieving the common aims for which the three were striving gave courage, stimulation and motivation that unity with diversity was not only desirable but possible.

The Briefing Session and Round Table I

The three-day program began intelligently with a briefing session to orient

*Held in Oakland, Calif., November 12-14, 1948.

Round Table chairmen and resource consultants to their duties and functions, and a luncheon meeting to acquaint the participants with "The Conference Plan" and the theme, "Aims of American Jewish Life." Breaking bread together and the cordiality of the expressions of welcome created that social atmosphere which dissolved any sense of strangeness or difference. Round Table I on "The Philosophy and Purpose of the Jewish Center Movement, from the Point of View of the Synagogue, the Jewish School and the Center" immediately followed. In this initial discussion professional center workers, Jewish educators and rabbis dominated the scene, possibly due to hesitancy and unpreparedness on the part of lay leaders to enter the proceedings at this early stage. There was unanimous agreement, that the Center, the School and the Synagogue are complementary agencies in providing opportunities for Jews to identify themselves with Jewish life; that the functions of the Synagogue and the School are well known; that the Center, as one of the important instruments of community, is a medium for Self-expression of cultural, social, health and recreational interests; that the individual is the focus of concern of these three institutions in terms of his total personality and comprehensive needs as a Jew and American; that common aims motivated the three.

A spirit of frankness and objective constructive criticism permeated the discussion. The mood was one of inspiration. The exploration of the basic issue and of misunderstandings between the Synagogue, the School and the Center was sincere and searching. The attempt to interpret the fundamentals of the Jewish Center Movement and to define aims in common with the Synagogue and School was sincere and meaningful. The joint effort of the total group assembled to see Jewish life in its entirety and to forge a chain of relationships in services and goals, with the individual Jew as the primary object, was most gratifying. Although the session did not arrive at a realistic working plan for cooperative action, a sound significant beginning was made toward mutual respect, understanding and rapport.

Oneg Shabbat—the Address of Rabbi Nussbaum

Friday evening and Saturday morning were devoted to synagogue services. The majority of Temples and Synagogues in San Francisco and nearby Oakland, where the Conference took place, joined in "Jewish Community Center Sabbath." In several, leaders of the Western States Region—JWB delivered the sermon on Friday night. The spirit and morale, the attitude of psychological unity on a basic expression of Judaism, was impressive and inspiring.

With the sanction and support of the local rabbinate, Saturday afternoon took the form of an unusual Oneg Shabbat. Beginning with lunch and going through the afternoon, Round Table II on "How Best to Achieve the Objectives of the Jewish Center Movement, from the Point of View of the Synagogue, the Jewish School and the Center," was the major part of the program. Parenthetically, the tradition and spirit of the Sabbath were closely observed; and the music hour of group singing of Jewish songs, of today and yesterday, was a source of emotional satisfaction. In the presentations at the luncheon, that of Rabbi Max Nussbaum of Los Angeles was outstanding for its clarity of definition of the role of the Jewish Center in Jewish life, in association with the Synagogue and Jewish School. Rabbi Nussbaum's theses were

as follows: American Jewry is overorganized; Jewish life in America has been departmentalized to such a degree that most of the forces for Jewish survival are divisive; the multitude of organizational groupings has directed Jewish loyalties in such a manner that individuals identify the totality of Judaism with that one part they have chosen for themselves reflecting a particularistic group ideology; religion which was the most unifying bond in the history of the Jewish people has, in our day, resulted in dividing Jewry into three groups, instead of uniting Jewry into one; the Center is one of the American Jewish agencies which can function as a great antidote to the departmentalization of Jewish life and as a unique unifying factor in the whole field of American Israel; in addition to being the all-embracive place of at-homeness, the Center serves the Synagogue and the School in a complementary fashion; not only does the Center promote creative Jewish activities but it also is a primary instrument in contributing to the psychological adjustment of Jews.

Then began an exciting discussion in which lay leaders predominated. Not only convictions, but actual community situations provided the frame of reference. The desire for *"tachlis"* was the dominant motive. There was excellent participation, a friendly spirit of discussion which aimed at localizing issues and resolving them, a determined effort to cultivate solid fertile ground on which the three institutions could function harmoniously and collectively in fulfilling their common destiny. Rabbi Nussbaum's presentation served primarily as the focus of attention, although the other talks initiating the Round Table were significant. Gradually there emerged the realization that "The Aims of American Jewish Life" as envisioned and defined by the Synagogue, the School and the Center were identical. Then why not work together to achieve these aims of perpetuating, enriching and expanding Jewish life? After a number of contributions defined the specialized areas of services of Synagogue, School, and Center, the need for a total community program became clear. It was recognized that Jewish life in America would be happier, fuller and much more meaningful if these three basic forces coordinated their services and functions into an integrated instrument of a diversified community program. Only thus would the interests of the total individual and his needs for security, identification, knowledge and self-expression be adequately served.

Again the searching and probing evidenced in this session by the lay leaders was sincere and enlightening. The general spirit manifested was one of a cooperative effort to find the answer to a basic community problem on the West Coast, namely how can duplication, competition, stress and strain between community organizations be resolved. Through the democratic process that obtained in the discussion varying points of view were given expression, and a consensus was reached that the programs of the Synagogue, the School and the Center could be merged into an overall community pattern that would express both the variety of the community's functional interests and the feeling of Jewish togetherness. The total effect of the session was one of inspiration and deep satisfaction.

Dr. Kaplan's Address

The occasion of Dr. Mordecai M. Kaplan's* address at the dinner session on Saturday night does not lend itself to

*Published in *The Reconstructionist*, November 26, 1947, under the title "When Will American Judaism Be Born?"

the usual procedure of an evaluation. An audience of some 300 community leaders, equally divided between San Francisco-Oakland and the rest of the West Coast area, experienced an event which to men who know, was outstanding, in the history of Jewry on the Pacific Coast. It was apparent several minutes after Dr. Kaplan had begun to speak that a thoughtful philosophy of Jewish life was unfolding. The contents of his paper permit no adequate evaluation in this report; it must be studied in entirety to understand its full import. Suffice it to state that it was a challenging presentation of a fundamental thesis. Dr. Kaplan's inquiry into what is American Judaism, his exposition of the meaning of psychological unity of the Jewish people, his definition of prerequisites for the birth of American Judaism, his analysis of the fundamental issues in terms of the organic Jewish community in America and his proposal that the National Jewish Welfare Board mobilize the resources of the country to implement the concept of a total Jewish community, were greeted with unusual enthusiasm by the audience. The applause at the conclusion of the address was exciting and reflected the depth to which the audience had been moved. For hours following the session, clusters of those in attendance discussed the presentation.

A Community Project Results

A concomitant of Dr. Kaplan's stirring message is worthy of note. One of the clusters, consisting of leaders in the Western States Section—JWB and representative leaders of the Peninsula area comprising many small communities south of San Francisco explored with Dr. Kaplan a situation that had developed in that area. Duplication and divisiveness were indicated between a newly organized Peninsula area community Center and a Synagogue about to embark on an extension program involving a new building. In the spirit of cooperation and interest in the total community, a plan was formulated whereby the needs, services and functions of both the Center and Synagogue could be merged so that the desires of Jews living in these several towns could be satisfied without either institution losing its identity and specialized role in Jewish life in the area involved.

Dr. Kaplan's Paper Discussed

The Third Round Table on the following morning reflected the inspiration of the previous evening, attracting a very large audience. The topic was "Interrelationships: How the Synagogue, the Jewish School and the Center Can Function Together." Intelligently, the Program Committee of the Conference changed the prepared plans and obtained the consent of Dr. Kaplan to serve as the focus of a question and answer session in connection with his presentation. The discussion was spirited. From all parts of the floor came requests for further interpretation of points that were not clearly understood, and particularly for explanation of the validity for selecting the JWB to initiate the process toward an organic Jewish community. Dr. Kaplan's further elaboration of the state of Jewish life in America today, the component elements of religious civilization, the basic characteristics of an authentic Jew, the meaning of psychological unity and the recognition deserved by the National Jewish Welfare Board, was impressive and persuasive. This was indicated by the consensus expressed calling upon the JWB to implement Dr. Kaplan's conception of organized Jewish life and assume the leadership in mobilizing the resources needed to effect the organic Jewish community.

Immdiately after this Round Table the Western States Section-JWB held a brief annual meeting, followed by that of the Western Region-American Association for Jewish Education.

Summary

The Conference as a whole was a moving experience. Significant in the proceedings and in the acceptance of Dr. Kaplan's presentation were the liberal, receptive climate of the Western States, the searching, probing effort distinctive of the area, to explore new realms of thought and action, and the newness and flexibility of the structure of Jewish life on the Pacific Coast. It is quite possible Dr. Kaplan made the trip to Oakland in order to present his paper advocating a radical approach to the problems of Jewish life in a climate unfettered by tradition and rooted vested interests. Whatever his motivation, Dr. Kaplan made a vital, provocative contribution to the thinking of American Jewish leadership. The Conference also significantly reflected the influence on public opinion, with respect to Jewish communal life and the Jewish Center, of the JWB Survey and its Statement of Principles, of the memorable address of the late Joshua L. Liebman, entitled "The American Jewish Adventure," at the annual meeting of the JWB, and of the growing efforts of Jewish Center and Jewish educational leaders to establish cooperative, meaningful relationships. The consensus at the Conference definitely reflected a belief that those present were given a rare experience in being selected as the participants in a history-making event.

The Conference can be termed an audit of the ledger of Jewish life with critical examination of the debit and credit columns. The results showed an unfavorable balance and the need to increase our communal assets. These must be raised to a point where opportunities for meaningful religious, educational, social and recreational expression in a coordinated community program provide clear solvency in the striving to be fully human and to achieve human destiny. The audit having been made, there now remains the process involved in bringing to fruition the desirable aims of American Jewish life.

WHAT IT MEANS TO KNOW GOD

The sense in which the prophets use the expression "to know God" is characteristic of their way of thinking. This conception means for them a cognition within man's life. Knowledge of God is not something which lies beyond the world of the here and now; it is something which remains within the sphere of ethical religion; it is rooted in man. . . . Knowledge of God and love for God stand side by side and are used by the prophets in the same sense. Just as it is said, "Love the Lord thy God," so is it also a spiritual demand that men should know Him. So deeply rooted is this demand for knowledge in the idea of ethical freedom, that once man does know God, he may stand up to Him. The ethical conscience can then make its demand on God, the demand of a man who knows Him. "Yet would I argue with Thee about Thy judgments" (Jer. 12:1). "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25).

To know God and to do right have thus become synonymous in prophetic speech; each has become a commandment. "For I desire mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings" (Hos. 6.6).

From *The Essence of Judaism,* by Leo Baeck, reprinted through the courtesy of Shocken Books, Inc. New York, 1948. $4.00.

Christmas in the Public Schools— A New Approach to the Problem

By ABRAHAM SEGAL

In our preceding issue we published the first of a series of two articles dealing with the problem of Christmas observance in the public schools. In that issue, Mr. Segal reviewed the various approaches to the problem such as that which deprecates its importance and would retain the status quo, that which recommends the introduction also of the celebration of Hanukkah, and that which would insist on the absolute elimination of all Christmas observance as inconsistent with the principle of separation of church and state. He found none of these approaches satisfactory. The present article states his views on what should be the correct Jewish approach to the problem. —*Editors.*

ALL human beings *observe* holy days and holidays. Public-school pupils should *commemorate* these days for cultural (not religious) reasons. They should devote as much time to Chinese, Japanese, Hindu, and other holidays as they do to the Christian or Jewish holidays. Neither Christian nor Jewish festivals should be *observed* in the public-school, just because there are Christian and Jewish children on roll. Public schools are not concerned with the faiths their pupils profess or the relative numbers professing them. They are concerned with commemorating all holidays as part of a broader program of studies, because holidays are *human* activities that all educated persons should know.

Let us see how this approach might work out, where we do not try to "ban" anything or "get in" anything, or defend, or attack, or counter-attack; but where we try for *basic* instruction in *human* culture.

Suppose we work to get schools to mark the winter season in human affairs. All peoples, we say, have a winter festival: it began when primitive men watched the days grow shorter in fear and trembling, and greeted solstice-day with joy and gladness. All peoples hate the cold and the dark, and symbolize death and evil by those conditions; all peoples, on the other hand, have imaginatively connected light and warmth with goodness and life. Winter, a *human* problem, has generated a *human* reaction. Each people has built upon this reaction in its own way, but without losing the basic human factor. Indeed, that factor could never be lost as long as people remain people. The particular holidays are quite different from one another as we celebrate them today; but they are different as brothers and sisters of a family are different: with all their differences, they had the same father and mother.

A public-school winter-festival will *use* Christmas and Hanukkah, and the Chinese and Japanese winter solstice feasts too. It will not treat them as rites for worshipers, but as proofs and examples of a common human experience. It will leave to each group the *observance* of its own particular festival in its own way and for its own purposes. The public-school will *commemorate* the basic, common, human heritage. The entertainments, the posters and displays, the songs and poetry, will all express the meaning of winter (battle with evil), solstice (climax), and spring (triumph of good) to *all* human beings.

Christmas, for Christians, has acquired special meaning through association with the birth of Christ; for non-Christians, its symbols are mainly those of the original pagan winter-feast, and they

ll add up to light, joy, birth, resurrec- on (spring), peace, good-will. Hanukkah, or Jews, means a historical event, a re- gious concept of life, and a set of cus- oms; for anyone else, these have come own from an original winter fire-and- ght festival,* and they still add up to ight, joy, freedom, growth, waning of vil, increase of goodness. In the public- chool, Jewish pupils should view Hanuk- ah as if they were curious, cultured Christians or Mohammedans; Chritian upils should view Christmas as if they vere curious, cultured Jews or Hindus.

By this approach, we do *not* equate Christmas and Hanukkah; we do *not* ad- ise Christians or Jews how to teach or elebrate or interpret their festivals within heir own churches, synagogues, homes, nd schools. We *use* their festivals (and ll other peoples' festivals besides) in ublic-school as interesting, exciting ex- mples of a general human reaction to he eternal threat of death, evil, and yranny (winter) and the eternal hope of ife, good, and freedom (spring).

The same approach, of course, fits the ther three seasons, and also the common human experiences of birth, adulthood, marriage, family relationships, and death; and ideas of God, morality, sin, repent- ance. This is a new, challenging approach to the place of religion in general educa- tion. Its primary value is what it does for Jewish children *as persons,* and only sec- ondarily is it a defense of their Jewish- ness. By this very fact, this approach puts up the strongest possible defense.

The problem of celebrating seasonal festivals of this kind, is not merely theo- retical; it has been tried and proved. Rachel Davis Dubois, in her *Get To- gether Americans,* has recorded the re- sults of these concrete demonstrations of cultural pluralism. This book tells of projects that engaged adults in neighborhoods of tension and group dis- like. Fellowship House, in Philadelphia, has been holding such affairs for high- school young people. Not all the festivals have been successful; much pioneering needs to be done, mistakes to be made. But there is also considerable experience stored up by now in community agencies all over the country. To that experience we look for our program.

Values of the Basic Approach

This approach is constructive, and nobody ought to object to it. We do *not* juggle semantically with terms like "church" and "state"; we ask for all chil- dren (including our own) the broadest and most intelligent training for the world we live in. We do this the year round, and we do it in no atmosphere of shamed or frightened pleading.

We do something about Christmas as it affects our children: we give it less time and emphasis, and we enable them to view it calmly and thoughtfully, as one brother views another's hobby or job. At the same time, we do this to Christmas only as the natural result of improving public-school instruction. Our children win a double gain; and we speak to our Christian brothers with clear conscience.

We do not involve ourselves in needless conflicts. We do not attack or antagonize. We do not put our holidays into competi- tion with other people's holidays.

We ourselves can think and work in a happier, healthier frame of mind. The tone in which most Jews discuss the prob- lem, publicly or privately, is shocking; they are bitter, confused, hesitant, hope- less. The basic program is sound, wise, just; it gives us a real *base,* and therefore inner security.

We would have two things to worry about: (1) We would need a wealth of

* For evidence of a pre-Maccabean Jewish winter-festival, see H. Schauss, *The Jewish Holidays,* pp. 224-225, and Note 261, p. 310.

materials and we would need many competent teachers. That should be our job: to make the materials and train the teachers. Some materials already exist; we should collect these, get more produced, and distribute them widely. We should seek the support of Jewish teachers in public-schools, and also of liberal Christians. We should get behind us the school librarians, the sponsors of school papers, the advisers of student-associations, the chairmen of assembly-programs. (2) Some religious leaders might frown at treating their particular religious observance as a cultural human phenomenon. Our answer should be a vigorous crusade for our basic point: religion belongs in the public-school, but only by right of its humanness, its commonness, its universality. We do *not* make it less religious by giving it its proper place. We do *not* weaken the hold of a particular religion in any way; in fact, we strengthen it by giving it deeper and broader appeal, greater dignity, more power than ever.

We would get two good results from all this: (1) we would cure the evils of present public-school Christmas (and, if we extend our approach, other sectarian practices too) (2) we would build group harmonies and friendships on the highest plane and for the best reason: the commonness of humanity.

The Method

What we have really been talking about, so far, is a goal. We have to know what that is, but we also have to think through another question: What steps should we take to get to this goal?

All that people have written, all they have said at meetings and forums on the Christmas problem, reveals this fallacy: they want to draw up rules and resolutions, frame policies, announce decisions, issue fiats. By this line of thinking, we are expected to work on state Legislatures, Boards of Education, school superintendents, principals, and teachers. We are expected to persuade everybody we can to hand down orders to those below them to act or desist from acting in some way. Thus, correct policy is to descend from top to bottom of school structure until it reaches the children.

But the right place to start is with the children—all the children, Jews, Christians, everybody. *They* should see the problem, *they* should study solutions, *they* should try improvements.

Working from the top down is a hard, thankless job. It means a new battle at each level. It means chance after chance for misunderstanding, disregard, disobedience, sabotage. It means an *imposed* behavior where what we want is an *inner change*. Working from the bottom up means action *now* right where we want it—in the children. It means changes that grow from the children themselves, and so have a good chance to work. It means a powerful argument on our side. If the children want to build a better school life, we do not have to use any other argument.

And finally, if the children work on the problem, it does not matter whether they do a perfect job, or how soon. The very act of working on the problem is bound to do something to them; the very fact that the children try to influence teachers and parents means progress for good.

How shall we get the problem to the children? The answer is: in Fellowship Clubs and activities at every school level. Here boys and girls of all faiths (and no faith) deliberately meet and work together to prove they can do things that way.

In Philadelphia, for instance, Fellowship House has pioneered and proved the feasibility of such clubs and activities. This is an institution set up by the

Friends, to teach and act a positive, creative philosophy of brotherhood. It has, among other things, sponsored Fellowship Clubs in senior and junior high schools, and organized them into city-wide associations. The Board of Education endorses these, and lends them professional guidance. Fellowship House joins with all other good-will agencies in a larger Fellowship Commission; this also endorses and supports the work with the children.

The movement began when anti-Semitic riots broke out in a certain high-school at Easter time. Everybody else was thinking in terms of *defense* and counter-attack; Fellowship House called together a group of students and asked what they were going to do about it. They decided to start a Fellowship Club, and from that start grew the whole movement, Board of Education support, community endorsement. They did not start at the top and work down, but went the other way around; that is why they have succeeded.

In the school in which the riots occurred, nobody has done anything whatever directly on the Christmas problem; and yet, a remarkable change has taken place since this school set up a Fellowship Club. A few years ago, the Christmas "show" turned the auditorium into a church: be-gowned and be-candled choristers trailed down the darkened aisles; gorgeous nativity and manger pageants moved across the stage; children heard the New Testament read with embellishments for eye and ear that, to a Jew, were offensively christological. Today, this school's Christmas "show" is innocent vaudeville: dancing, singing, stunts, comedy. Last December, the principal said his vacation good-bye to the children in this wise: "Some of you are going out to celebrate one holiday, some another. I wish you all a joyous, happy winter vacation."

At the same time, a tradition has grown up in the school of what is called an "Easter-Passover" program. This is actually a seasonal (spring) commemoration. Some years, Passover and Easter are worked into the program; other years, they are not even mentioned. The school is recognizing spring, and its pupils can go home and celebrate anything else they want to.

This change in the atmosphere of the school (it had Christian-Jewish brawls at Easter only a few years ago!) is due to the indirect influence of the school's Fellowship Club and activities. Nobody planned or directed this particular change; the children did not try for this result, and they do not know they have achieved it. The club has been busy with library projects, bulletin boards, social affairs, discussions of prejudice, and many other activities. But all the while, they were building wider than they knew.

We must see that such clubs start, and we must support them where they exist. We must turn over to them all the questions we can: the question of Bible clubs — should not these take up the "bibles" of all faiths, as well as the Christian Bible? the question of Bible-reading — should we not use any great literature, religious or secular, for an inspiring reading to start today? the question of holiday dates—when Easter and Pesah overlap, should we not adjust the school vacation to fit *both*? the question of religion in American life—should not our courses and texts do justice to the religious forces behind our country's beginnings, our documents, our ideals?

In due time, with due preparation and guidance, the club can move into the area of holiday celebration. It can try its hand at seasonal festivals for its own members, then at seasonal assembly programs. Perhaps it can move on to city-wide affairs.

Nobody can lay out an exact chart of what such a club will do. If it exists at all, and has an alert, hard-working sponsor, whatever it does will be to the good. The members will have their own ideas; they will exchange ideas with other Fellowship members; they will be receptive to ideas from any group in the community. They will be spark plug, generator, engine, all in one; they will propel the school down wider roads and broader avenues. They may even teach us sated, saddened grown-ups this vital lesson: we can be strong Jews or strong Christians, and still live and work together as strong members of the body of mankind.

This, then, is the two-way program for us: aim to turn the public-school into a true "house for all peoples"; and call on the children of our schools to do it.

A Christmas Letter by a Jew

Dear Friend:

I read your last letter with great interest, particularly these lines: "I come from an agnostic environment, but am seeking for religion, although I was reared on skepticism, atheism and contempt for religion. The need to recognize something more important, more intelligent than man is very apparent; for as soon as one begins to think, it becomes clear that man, even though a creature endowed with a capacity for thought and reason, does not act according to logic. How fill the gap? Shall I, who have had no religious affiliation until now, join the religion of my ancestors or that of my neighbors? In essence and in their modern interpretation, they are not so different as is generally supposed. They both stand for peace and good will, for the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man, for the dignity of the human soul and the Kingdom of God as the goal of mankind. Cannot the Christmas tree with its carols arouse my religious sentiments as well as, if not better than, a Hanukkah menorah with the *Maoz Tzur*?"

You ask me a difficult question, but I shall try to answer it as well as I can. Without doubt, the two religions have much in common. The reason is that both respond to similar human needs and are similarly transformed and reinterpreted by the *Zeitgeist,* the spirit of the age. In the Middle Ages both were fundamentalist and other-worldly. In the era of Enlightenment both were rational. When the trend toward mysticism broke out, both discovered their mystical aspects. And now when existentialism is prevalent, both religions prove that they have always been existentialist.

The social gospel, that religion shall effect a Kingdom of God here and now by fighting war, poverty, injustice and perversion of all kinds, is a relic of an older, more rational and social-minded generation. After two world wars we have become more skeptical. All the old panaceas, such as liberalism, socialism, nationalism, democracy and anarchism have lost much of their original flavor. The world has become more complex. There are many causes for an evil and many possible effects of a remedy. The socialism of Marx wanted to abolish the state and created a totalitarian state; democracy wanted to bring equality and brought plutocracy; liberalism fathered fascism, and nationalism brought on the decline instead of the progress of nations. Hitler wanted to eliminate Judaism and was liquidated, while Israel was reborn after two thousand years of dispersal and

persecution. Science came to man to usher in an era of plenty and prosperity and produced mass starvation and the burning of living men on a large scale. Too many broken promises obstruct the way. Therefore man feels helpless and frustrated and looks again for some superhuman assistance.

Religion, therefore, is no longer a watchdog to keep the unbridled masses in order, nor an opiate to sooth away their sense of wrong, but a real need like the need for friendship and love, for security and comfort, for satisfaction and meaning. Religion has become as indispensable a means of existence as are health and income. Many of the great adversaries of religion have contributed to its revival. Freud and Marx discovered, in different spheres of life, that man is not determined by reason but by interest or instincts, by needs. If need is our father, religion is our mother. Our economy tries to satisfy our hunger and greed, our State our need for security and order. But who satisfies our need for a worthy life, for evaluation of things and for direction of life? Science can create tools, but not goals, and art can give form to ideals but not create them.

The spiritual needs, as we may call them, are ubiquitous; therefore, the similarity of all modern religiousness. Christians, Jews and adherents of other religions, as well as independent thinkers, all share the same turmoil and troubles characteristic of our age. Existentialism is the philosophy of our time. That means that our reason is not adequate enough to answer our questions. We must take our guidance from our needs. That is a far cry from Spinoza, Kant, Hegel and Hermann Cohen. But of course we cannot throw our reason into the garbage can. Even reason came into existence in response to need. Therefore we must not become too irrational or unreasonable. Otherwise, we destroy the world by organizing genocide, as did Hitler, or by an atomic war, or by the indoctrination of any single state-enforced doctrine. Reason is good as an organ of criticism, even if it is not adequate as creator of values. Values are created by men of insight, by seers and prophets, by creative pioneers and poets. Religion is the creation of seers, organized by priests. Now we understand why the different civilizations and nations have different religions. The seer comes from a nation or civilization and interprets the deepest needs of his people in a language and symbols understood by his people.

That is the reason why the Jews have never been able to celebrate Christmas in the way their Christian neighbors do. Jews have always felt differently. They are too realistic to believe that the Messiah has already come when they see poverty, slavery, injustice, persecution and war around the corner. The dreaming nations, such as the Germans, for instance, may be able to dream of a world of good will and peace for all men in the very midst of concentration camps and trains bearing children to their doom in the Nazi furnaces. For the Jew, religion has never been an opiate, but a necessity. He has been persecuted, hated and outlawed. But he has not felt himself inferior to his Christian neighobr in morality, courage, energy and intelligence. Why, then, does this injustice exist? The medieval answer was: We Jews must suffer for our sins. The modern answer is: We must fight for betterment. We must use our intelligence and energy to create a better world.

At first, the Jews wanted to enlighten the Gentiles and bring them culture, liberalism and socialism. When Jews realized that they were all the more hated on that account, that they had become trouble-makers in the sight of all those

who profited by the *status quo,* they tried to create a commonwealth of their own. If that will not succeed, they will try something else.

Now religion is not politics. Politics is based on power and prestige. It ought to be based on religion. Look at the Berlin conflict. Both sides have no religion. If they had, they would be less stubborn, less cocksure, more humble and more friendly. Religion makes for better men. Religion is the belief that, if men concentrate their thought and energy on helping and encouraging one another, the world will become a better world. God is not visible, but can be made visible by creating a nobler human being and a nobler world. Man, says the Torah, can see God's "back" but not His "face."

The Messiah is the symbol of the fulfilled Kingdom of God. His era renders visible God's existence on earth. We may anticipate his advent in religious observances as the Jews do in their worship on the Day of Atonement, and on many other occasions, but we must not assume that he is already in existence. Christianity must learn this too, if it is to become a realistic religion and not only a religion for an idealistic elite. It must recognize that Jesus was a teacher who taught on behalf of the Kingdom, of the coming Christ, but who was not yet the real Christ-Messiah. The day they proclaim this is the day when Jew and Christian will celebrate a common Feast of Light. But not one day before, for Israel's mission is then still on the way.

I hope you will understand now why we Jews cannot believe in Santa Claus or inhale with satisfaction the Christ-has-come atmosphere of the Christmas season. Religion is for us not incense but vitamin.

Yours sincerely,

IMMANUEL LEWY

PRAYER

Prayer is a universal phenomenon in the soul-life of man. It is the soul's reaction to the terrors and joys, the uncertainties and dreams of life. "The reason why we pray," says William James, "is simply that we cannot help praying." It is an instinct that springs eternally from man's unquenchable faith in a living God. . . . Prayer is a Jacob's ladder joining earth to heaven; and, as nothing else, wakens in the children of men the sense of kinship with their Father on High. It is "an ascent of the mind to God"; and, in ecstasies of devotion, man is raised above all earthly cares and fears. The Jewish Mystics compare the action of prayer upon the human spirit to that of the flame on the coal. "As the flame clothes the black, sooty clod in a garment of fire, and releases the heat imprisoned therein, even so does prayer clothe a man in a garment of holiness, evoke the light and fire implanted within him by his Maker, illumine his whole being, and united the Lower and the Higher Worlds" (Zohar).

From the *Daily Prayer Book,* with commentary, introductions and notes, edited by Joseph H. Hertz, reprinted through the courtesy of Bloch Publishing Co., New York City. Revised edition, 1948. $5.00.

Songs of the Shepherd King

By HELEN JOY WEINBERG

I
DAVID AND SAUL

"Play, shepherd lad, play,
"Sound your psaltery for my sickened ear.
"Evil has entered my slumbering soul.
"Do you not see its spirit lowering there?
"Play, shepherd lad, sound your sweet-throated lyre
"And it may be that fame in Israel
"Shall be your portion through the might of Saul."

The purple-lidded monarch fretful tossed
Among the rich-hued velvets of his couch.
Then David bent his bright curled head
Toward his beloved dulcet lyre.
His soft, boy's eyes half closed,
His hand scarce brushed the strings.
"How lovely are Thy dwellings," he sang,
"Thy dwellings, Lord of hosts."
The shepherd singer smiled;
White radiance suffused the air,
And something dark crept from the room.

II
DAVID AND GOLIATH

In clanking brazen mail the giant stood,
His height was full six cubits and a span,
Before the ranks of Israel he stood
And blared his challenge, "Give to me a man
"That he and I may fight this day a good
"Fight, and let him prevail who can."
And Saul and Israel's armies silent lay,
Viewing Goliath's brawn in pale dismay.

For forty days, from morn till evening's fall,
This challenge tauntingly he would proclaim,
Then upward to the ranks of Israel
From Elah's valley, fresh-limbed David came.
With leaping eyes he turned to haggard Saul,
"Let not thy valiant head be bowed in shame.
"Thy servant will engage the Philistine;
"Jehovah's might for thee shall intervene."

Casting aside the sword brought by the king,

Because he had not proved its pliant blade,
Five stones he chose and put into his sling,
And faced the towering giant unafraid.
The Philistine with sword and spear gleaming,
Of David's simple weapons rough sport made.
"Am I a dog," he roared, "That thou should'st try
"With stones my mighty flesh to mortify?"

Then David cried unto the champion,
"Thou comest with a sword and with a spear,
"But in Jehovah's name have I begun
"This battle, and the Lord of hosts will hear,
"The God of Israel will yield to none.
"Before Him powerless thy braggart's jeer."
From taut-pulled strings a round white object sped,
And on the ground a giant shadow spread.

III
DAVID AND JONATHAN

Great friend of mine, what love is yours
That even claims of flesh denies,
That risks the vengeance of a king
And boldly a father's wrath defies.

My soul and thine are closely knit,
And I will covenant with thee
And pray that love to recompense;
The Lord twixt us shall ever be.

Ah, Jonathan, my brother soul,
Though fleshly loves may claim my heart,
Thy friendship is my beacon light,
Of thee I'll ever be a part.

IV
DAVID AND URIAH

Black treachery is this
To slay thus unprepared
A loyal servant of the king.
But I am master here,
I can do as it please my will;
No man dares criticize my act.
Perhaps 'tis needful that Uriah be
There where the fight is thickest,
Where his bravery may help the rest.

Ha, David, lie not to thyself!
Thou knowest why Uriah dies.

Once having lain with his soft wife,
Thy passion has but kindled hundredfold.
O, God, my flesh cries for her satin skin,
Her high, pink-budded breasts
Are temple spires that call to worship,
I must press close to her once more
And feel that divine rapture again.

Yes, I, who swore to keep the covenant,
Thus stoop to soil a sacred trust.
But, O, a woman's round white form
Is like a blinding bandage to man's eyes,
Hiding all other visions from his sight.

V
DAVID AND ABSALOM

What does it mean that I have won,
That all my enemies have fled,
That thousands on the field have bled? . . .
O, Absalom, my son, my son!

Your legions perished, every one,
The rivers with their blood are red,
But you, the golden-haired, are dead. . . .
O, Absalom, my son, my son!

They call me to behold the sun,
To staunch my tears and leave my bed.
The ashes gather where I tread. . . .
O, Absalom, my son, my son!

'Tis the defeated that have won,
Theirs is the victory instead
Of mine. I sit with lowered head. . . .
O, Absalom, my son, my son!

VI
DAVID AND SOLOMON

Behold, the time has come, my son,
When I return again unto the earth,
And gladly do I turn away
From all the sounding brass of life's alarms.
I have lived long and to the full,
Have tasted of the bitter and the sweet
And oft have fallen from the word of God,
Always to find forgiveness at his throne.

And now, my son, but show thyself a man,
Be strong and just and follow in God's way,

And surely thou shalt prosper, for 'tis writ
That if my children walk but in the truth,
There shall not ever fail a man of us
To sit upon the throne of Israel.

Life has been good, my son. . . .
A beautiful adventure here,
A vision of something beyond.
But I am tired now—take thou the crown.

Facing a New Era*

By MAX WEINE

THE independence of Israel is the culmination of the dreaming and the striving of the Jewish people for the past two thousand years. But the idea that Israel could, by its own efforts, make the dream come true dates from the Emancipation Era. It was then that Israel took the first blundering step toward self-emancipation. It rebelled against the *galut* and the homelessness of Jews. With some, the revolt took the form of seeking complete integration with the nations among whom Jews lived. But the disillusionment resulting from the rise of modern anti-Semitism reawakened the messianic hope of the ages for a restoration of Israel on its own soil, but this time by its own efforts, not by miraculous intervention of Providence. To say that Zionism is the solution of the Jewish problem is meaningless unless we particularize the specific things that we expect Zionism to do for us.

The two main facets of the Jewish problem are the homelessness of the Jewish people and anti-Semitism. They are related but not identical. Before the Emancipation there was no anti-Semitism in the modern sense of the word. But there was homelessness, perhaps more keenly felt then than now. Anti-Semitism is a concomitant of Emancipation, and in those countries where Jews will continue to live in modern democratic states, anti-Semitism will continue to exist in more or less aggravated form. But the homelessness of the Jewish people will cease to be a fact. Jews in emancipated countries will regard the places of their residence as their home, anti-Semitism or no anti-Semitism. So long as Jews are given equal political status, they will feel that anti-Semitism, not Judaism, is out of place in their country. In the State of Israel there can be no question of Jews' being at home. They will be the creators of their own social environment and will, within limits, determine the nature of their social and individual existence.

The New Historic Situation

This is the crux of the matter. With the creation of the State of Israel our people turned a corner. A new epoch in the history of our people has begun, one that may have points of resemblance to previous periods of Jewish independence, but that will be essentially new and different. For true as it is that history repeats itself, it is equally true that history never repeats itself in the same terms. Jewish life cannot be expected to con-

*This is an abridgement of a longer article which was submitted to us. —*Editors.*

ıue in Israel from the point where it as broken off some two thousand years o. We shall not restore the Temple ıd its sacrifices—that is a foregone conclusion. The restoration of the Sanhedrin the highest judiciary body is also hardto be expected. It would today be rtually impossible to restore the entire ody of Talmudic and rabbinic law as functioning legal system in Israel. A eocratic state runs counter to the spirit modern times. Such a state in Israel ould be inaccaptable today to the great ajority even of its Jewish inhabitants, nd Israel will have Christian and oslem citizens as well. To exist in the odern world, Israel will have to be a ecular state, with the fullest freedom of ought and practice in the field of reliion that is consistent with public order nd the equal right of all citizens. Com lete equality of the sexes must be a asic principle of all Israeli law.

All this will at first appear to be a dangerous break in the continuity of Jewish tradition and a departure from the hallowed past. But such breaks have taken place before, and time has healed the breach and reestablished the broken connection. To the extent that they are consistent with the requirements of modern life, the broad principles and spirit of Talmudic and rabbinic legislation will naturally be preserved. Even many of the concrete provisions of Jewish traditional law will probably be carried over.

The major innovation in the legal structure of the Jewish state will be its exercise of legislative powers. This was a function that no rabbinical body had ever considered within its competence except for temporary emergencies.

The other field in which radical changes are bound to occur is that of religious theory and practice. The body of Orthodox observance cannot and will not be the norm in Israel. The traditional observances reflect in spirit the last two thousand years of Jewish religious life, but Israel is a new country with young inhabitants and a new social, economic and intellectual milieu. To expect Israeli inhabitants to live religiously by the norm and practice of other periods and countries is unreasonable. With the reverence that these Jews have for the basic values and ideals of Jewish religion we can expect that they will adapt them as far as possible to the needs of their new life and express them in new and appropriate forms. This process is bound to take time before it comes to fruition. No artificial grafting of new growth on the old will do.

Indeed, the process has its perils. Israeli Jewry may, at times, loose its religious moorings. Whole sections of the people may be indifferent to religion, or may have very hazy notions on the subject. There may even be occasional outbreaks of anti-religion. But all these phenomena must be considered in the light of a process whereby the religion of Judaism is adapting itself to a new situation, while simultaneously maintaining its identity. The Israeli community is in the midst of that very process now. Our *halutzim* have been described as irreligious. Serious observers of Jewish life there have wondered what the future of Judaism will be on the very soil that gave it birth. If we view the situation as a process that is bound to work itself out in time, we will have greater grounds for optimism. For the *halutzim* are a serious generation, radical in the sense that they probe to the roots of every problem. But that sort of radicalism also characterized their forefathers in the creative ages of Jewish history. Only by disturbing the roots of the Jewish heritage and irrigating and fertilizing them with new ideas, can those roots be made to grow and produce fruit and seed "after their kind." There will

definitely be continuity with the past, undoubtedly more so in this realm than in the field of constitutional and civil law. But there will also be change, a newness and a freshness that we have not been able to experience these two thousand years. Religion will be the outgrowth and expression of the life of the modern Jew in Israel, and as such will be as sacred to him as the Orthodox practices have been to the traditionalist Jew.

Even in anticipation of Jewish statehood the Yishuv has been culturally creative. So, for that matter, have Jews in the diaspora, but their creativity has for the most part not been a product of Jewish collective life. Only in Israel can the creations of Jews generally be credited to the Jewish people. The Jews in Israel will thus constitute the normal creative core of the Jewish people. Jews living in other lands will live there by choice and will regard their new countries as the objects of their political allegiance. But this will not preclude their being bound by strong cultural and religious ties with their brethren in Israel. In our highly interconnected and interrelated world such a situation is not at all unusual. Catholics throughout the world have a highly disciplined religious affiliation with the Vatican, an independent political state. The modern man is free to roam all over the world for the type of cultural interests that will satisfy him and give him happiness.

The Chances of Jewish Creative Activity in America

Where then does all this leave the Jewish community of the United States? Is it doomed to extinction? Will its fate be that of the Jewish community of ancient Alexandria, to which American Jewry has often been compared? Is it, too, doomed to disappear completely from the stage of Jewish history? That is what many expect. They foresee no future for our community of over five million Jews except one of gradual but inevitable dissolution.

True, the picture of the present inner life of the Jewish community here is a dismal one. Ignorance, indifference, and confusion characterize the attitudes of most American Jews to their Jewish heritage. But this need hardly remain the case. There are religious and cultural forces at work, which, if wisely directed, can give American Jewry an excellent chance not only to survive, but to flourish. Jewish life in America will be different from what it is at present or from what it was in the past. But it will be life, and it will be Jewish, and it will be worth living.

One of the weaknesses of the Jewish situation in America has been the dependence of American Jewry on its mother country—Eastern Europe. From there came, for the most part, the personnel, the beliefs and practices, the social forms and institutions that have constituted the strength of American Jewry. With the decline of the Eastern European Jewish community we felt ourselves lost. We never realized, however, that our dependence on that community would have doomed Jewry here either to disintegration or to rebellion. To transplant East European life to America and expect it to flourish is naive. It could, perhaps, exist for a while in a ghetto, where it would live the life of a hothouse plant insulated from the spiritual climate of the outside world. But America is not its natural habitat. Without the segregation of the ghetto, it would not withstand the blasts of competing religious and cultural interests that blow in the American climate. To try to impose on American Jewry the life of the East European Jews could only generate rebellion. Examples of the hot-house variety of Judaism and of

rebellion against it are conspicuous the American scene.

t is equally true that American Judaı could not hope to be self-sufficient self-sustaining. The opportunities afded by a democracy to share in the tural life of the nation make such uring desirable and imperative. This ans that our Jewish interests can enge only our spare moments, after we ve met the demands of the newspaper, radio, the movie, etc. That is why have here no Jewish environment, no sely knit community or social life. Only a Jewish state could Jewish life be f-sustaining.

e Advantage of an Israeli Rather an an East-European Orientation

It is significant, however, that Ameri- n Jewish life will henceforth be orien- ted not to Eastern Europe but to Israel. hat will make a difference. Unlike East uropean Jewry of the past, Israeli Jewry as the advantage of being in every way odern, and in many ways more modern d advanced than we ourselves. That un make of Israel a center of attraction, spiritual center at once intensely and rvidly Jewish and undeniably modern. his is the new factor in the Jewish tuation which gives new hope for the ewish future in America. This new orienation toward a modern, creative, autonohous cultural community in Israel may roduce phenomena in Jewish life utterly nforeseen by us. But we need not fear hese phenomena, for, produced by our eople on its ancestral soil, they will of ecessity be true to the nature and desiny of Israel. The State of Israel, moreover, being a modern, secular, democratic tate, faced with many problems and sitiations similar to those confronting us ere, will of necessity have much in common with America. Its values will herefore be much more easily transplanted to American soil than those of East European Jewry in the past.

To be sure, we cannot expect in this country to live the full life of the Israeli Jew, with all its intensity and variety, but we can approximate that life by virtue of the religious and cultural bond that unites us with it.

American Jewry will have to appropriate what it can of the culture of Israel through the medium of the Hebrew language. Hebrew literature, Jewish art, Jewish music will thus serve as a secondary culture for American Jewry. Jews have often been bi-lingual and bi-cultural, and so have other peoples. For American Jews to become so would not be at all unnatural or impossible. In fact it would be advantageous to America as well as to Jewry, adding an interesting variation to the cultural pattern of our country. American Jewry will then live Jewishly the cultural life of Israel insofar as possible. It will sing Hebrew songs, patronize the Hebrew theater, appreciate and support Hebrew art, and read Hebrew literature. Hebrew culture will give new meaning and content, new form, color and designs to Jewish life in this country. It will contribute to our happiness and self-fulfilment.

The other bond between Israel and ourselves will be religious. Religion to be vital has to be the outgrowth of the social, cultural, and economic life of the community, has to meet its needs and help solve its problems. We have already pointed out that religion in Israel, while maintaining continuity with the past and cherishing its permanent spiritual values, will produce new forms of expression relevant to contemporary life. American Jewry is more apt to find inspiration and forms worthy of imitation in the modern religion of Israel than in the Jewish religious tradition as inherited from the past. We have already adopted some

of those new forms and introduced them successfully on the American scene. The Oneg Shabbat has thus become an integral part of Sabbath observance here; the Bikkurim Festival has been utilized to give more color to the observance of Shavuot; and other rituals and observances "made in Israel" may similarly become a part of American Jewish religious life. The old, unchanging values of Jewish religion will thus be clothed in new raiment and rendered more acceptable. They will have a better chance of serving their purpose than some of the old observances that are becoming obsolete.

The Adjustment to Americanism

But American Jewry will have to make its religious expression also conform to the demands of American life. To some extent, it has already begun to do so. Thanksgiving has become a part of the religious life of the American Jew. Other aspects of American life are also taking on a religious character, and are finding their way into the synagogue and into the prayerbook. Brotherhood Sabbath, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Armistice Day and others may be made more effective by becoming part of the religious tradition of Americans of all faiths. Jewish forms of observances and the resources of our liturgy and experience may make such celebrations an integral part of the synagogue service. They will thus not divert Jews from interest in Judaism but enhance that interest while simultaneously strengthening their ties to America.

Secondly, American Israel will have to stress more emphatically than ever prophetic religion in contradistinction to ritual observance. Such observance is crumbling away because much of it is impossible under present conditions or possible only at the cost of inordinate sacrifice. Greater emphasis will therefore have to be placed on Judaism as a way of ethical and religious living. It will have to be the kind of Judaism that will commit Jews to definite standards of moral and social conduct. The Quakers afford an excellent example of how a religion can influence the ethical behavior of its adherents. Jews will have to pledge themselves and learn to live Jewish lives that will testify to the truth of their ideals and the values of their cultural tradition.

And thirdly, no religious life can function without a measure of ritual, prayer and ceremony. The more wholeheartedly Jews commit themselves to the ethical ideals of prophetic Judaism, the more will they be moved to articulate those ideals as well in some form of ritual, ceremony, and prayer. The Sabbath will undoubtedly remain a day of prayer (if not the day of rest) for the Jewish community here. This is a minimum. With proper cultivation it may, and should, also serve as the occasion for satisfying other specific Jewish interests, such as study, artistic presentation, etc., insofar as the economic pattern of American life will permit. Similarly the Jewish holidays will be observed not only with prayer but with all the artistic, musical, and dramatic creations that can effectively convey their meaning.

The Future of Jewish Community Organization

Among the positive contributions that America can make to Jewish life, a prominent place must be assigned to democratic community organization. Elements of democracy have always been part of Jewish community life. But here in this country they are reinforced by the tradition on which the United States is founded. And community organization must be regarded as an essential factor making for

survival of American Jewry. It will the individual a sense of belonging, eing wanted and protected, and of g, at the same time, responsible for to his fellows. He will be aware of g a member of a community with a ry and a culture, and will not find elf a cultural parvenu, shunned and at a distance. He will find his bear- through a religion that commits him nare in the historic destiny of a peo- in its endeavors to establish God's on earth. Out of the communal chaos ewish life in America, democratic in- nces are gradually shaping new forms voluntary and responsible community nization. These forms vary in differ- parts of the country, and in com- nities of different sizes, but there is doubt that they all exemplify an old ish tradition made effective and oper- e here through the influence of the nocratic tradition of the United States.

w Approaches in ish Education

n this picture of the emerging Jewish nmunity in America two factors will y a decisive role. These are Jewish ucation and the rabbinate. Jewish edu- ion has suffered in the United States m the same difficulty that has beset vish life in general. It has been trying perpetuate obsolescent forms, to sal- ge the wreckage of the East European dition. The school has been burdened th a task too heavy for it. By relying the school as the sole means to salva- n for American Jewry, the Jewish ild is being expected to carry the bur- n of a Jewish tradition that the adult ds too heavy to bear.

That is a vain hope. The school cannot reserve the old except by creating the w. The school, instead of trying to fset the negative influence of the home and the general environment, must endeavor to supplement and reinforce the positive influences. Instead of trying to recreate the sort of Jewish environment that is disintegrating, it should rather reckon with the actual environment of the American Jew, eliciting what is already implied in the cultural milieu of the Jewish child. It should create what is potentially there and waiting to be created. It should articulate what is unexpressed in the environment. The American educational system, for instance, has the enormous mass of material of American civilization to work with and the raw material of its environment to create with. So also with Jewish education. If it is to succeed, it must first of all give up the impossible task of imbuing children with a type of Judaism which is becoming obsolete and inoperative and which the child as it grows up will not be able to practice. But it should make available to the Jewish child those cultural resources of the Jewish and the American environment which will enable him increasingly as he matures to participate in the shaping of the Jewish future. It must bring him in touch with those forces that are creating the type of Jewish life in this country which can be lived with satisfaction and joy.

The Role of the Rabbinate

The position of the rabbi will also undergo some modification. He will have to be primarily and essentially a religious leader, one who preaches and teaches and exemplifies significant, meaningful Jewish living. Until now, too much of the time and energy of most rabbis has been preempted by the various aspects of the Jewish problem. Problems are a part of life, but we must, in light of the happenings of this year, rid ourselves of the notion that Jewish life itself is a prob-

lem, rather than a process which both generates and resolves problems. The assurance of Jewish survival through the establishment of the state of Israel will leave a void in the program and activities of the rabbi as in those of many Jewish lay leaders. So much of what both have been doing will become irrelevant and pointless. This void will have to be filled by the rabbi, both for himself and for the layman, by emphasis on religion. He will have to teach the people with whom he comes in contact how to think, feel, and live as Jews in the United States, how to find meaning and value in life, and how to make their lives an embodiment of all that Judaism stands for as a creative, life-giving faith. He will have to be to his congregation what the Christian pastor is to his—a religious teacher and counsellor. He will have to utilize the Jewish and the American milieu for the shaping of modern, religious personalities.

It is dangerous to prognosticate. At best one can only do so in most general terms. But we should not view the future of Jewish life in this country with despair. In fact, there is more reason today for hope in the future of American Jewry than there has ever been in the past. If we take advantage of all the possibilities that the present and future afford us, particularly if we take full advantage of the influences emanating from the State of Israel, we may look to the future with considerable confidence. If, in addition, we realize those potentialities of the American environment which can serve us in achieving a wholesome Jewish life in this country, we can not only check the current process of decay, but also stimulate new growth and give to American Jewry a new lease on life. American Jewish life will be different in the future from what it has been. It will be rooted in the present of Israel as well as in its past. It will be the kind of Jewish life that Jews will be able to live and will desire to live.

Random Thoughts

Of all the bridge-builders those who will succeed in throwing a bridge over the chasm between creed and deed will be the most blessed.

* * *

A religion that asks much gets something; a religion that asks little gets nothing.

* * *

Exaggerated traditionalism in politics, art, science or religion is a form of cultural thumb-sucking.

* * *

Many people are like zeros in that they exercise power not by virtue of what they are but by virtue of their proximity to some one that counts.

The Talmud records one current popular saying to the same effect: "Attach yourself to one of high rank and people will bow to you."

* * *

Intolerant people are those who cannot bear to see in others the failing which they refuse to see in themselves.

* * *

The only illusions that can ever be creative are those that are not created.

* * *

Alongside the vexing problem which agitates many an American Jew, whether or not to remain a Jew, the problem of ritual observance sounds like the problem

he split infinitive alongside that of the
t personality.

* * *

Moral law operates through self-re-
int.
uridical law operates through external
raint.
When juridical law is based on moral
, the external restraint through which
perates is actually a form of collective
-restraint.

* * *

True prayer is one the very utterance of
ich is partly its own fulfillment.

* * *

Why does the slogan "In God We
ust" appear only on national coins but
t on other legal tender?
Is it because we only trust in God when
don't have to trust in man?

* * *

Not the least among the advantages of
etz Yisrael is that it has made Israel
otogenic.

* * *

These are the degenerations of man:
Agriculture begat industry.
Industry begat commerce.
Commerce begat luxury.
Luxury begat necessity.
Necessity begat invention.
Invention begat total war.
And total war begat world catacylsm.

* * *

We have as little right to renounce our
vn freedom as to deprive others of their
eedom.

* * *

More people are shamed into vice than
to virtue.

* * *

The best academic education is as far
way from life as the Czerny exercises are
rom Beethoven.

* * *

The nearest the Bible comes to having
musical comedy, is the case of Jonah singing a psalm in the belly of the whale, and the whale not being able to endure him.

* * *

A general rule or principle as rarely fits a particular case without qualification as a ready-to-wear garment fits an individual customer without some alteration.

* * *

Some one said that newborn infants are the last word in selfishness.

Would that it were the last word and not the first.

* * *

When people will buy the newspaper with the editorial policy of which they disagree, and audiences will be made up of those who differ with what the speaker has to say, the millenium will be here.

* * *

Only those who know when they are licked are licked.

* * *

Being a fishy-eyed reactionary is not the only alternative to being a starry-eyed visionary.

* * *

The actual human being is little more than a caricature of Man.

* * *

According to Pascal, "the heart has its reasons which reason doesn't know."

So has the patient ailments which the doctor doesn't know.

As little as that would justify the patient to dismiss the doctor, so little can the heart dispense with reason, because reason doesn't know everything.

* * *

Subjects of hypnosis are known to chew shoe leather under the impression that it is succulent beefsteak.

When we are subject to the hypnosis of big names or great numbers, we smack our lips on artistic tripe and philosophic fustian.

M. M. K.

Correspondence

Defends Rabbinical Council's Attitude to Chief Rabbinate of Israel

Sirs:

In the November 26 issue of your magazine you take to task The Rabbinical Council of America for its suggestion that the Chief Rabbinate of Israel be recognized as the supreme religious authority for our Jews.

To your query as to who delegated such authority to the R.C.A. I might suggest that an organization consisting of 400 rabbis has at least as much authority to propose such a step as your editors have when they, in the same issue suggest the Hebrew University as the personification of the new unity of Israel.

It sounds paradoxical to say the least, for an organization that purportedly evaluates Judaism as a religious civilization, to select a wholly secular institution. May I also remind you that the Rabbinical Council spoke only for those *rabbanim* that respect and accept traditional Rabbinical Authority. It did not speak for the Reform who have long since overthrow such authority, and even the rabbis affiliated with your movement are not *rabbanim* in the sense of Religious Authority, a fact which was pointed out by Dr. Robert Gordis in a recent issue of your own magazine.

You must very well be aware that no one wishes to create a Papacy in Israel, and dragging this theological red herring into the discussion does not strengthen your case. Your assertions, moreover, that the Rabbinate of Israel had no authority over that of the Diaspora does not square with historical facts. The authority of Palestine after the destruction was not limited to that of the calendar. It also included that of granting Semikhah or Ordination. The consideration of the latter is very crucial in our discussion for it clearly indicates that Rabbinical authority and its very source were vested in Palestinian hands. It was precisely under the Amoraim and even of the Saboraim that the Babylonian academies looked for guidance and authoritative finality to the schools of Palestine. It was not until the year 921, that this religious supremacy was successfully challenged by Saadia Gaon.

I need not regale you with untold citation from the Babylonian Talmud itself of the respect and reverence its authors held for the authority of the Holy Land. May I just quote the experience of one such individual who fasted 40 days on reaching Palestine that he might forget the Torah of the exile and learn in its wholesomeness the Torah of Eretz Yisrael. It seems peculiarly paradoxical to acclaim the centrality of Israel and the supremacy of its spirit in every mundane manifestation of Jewish life but to deny or challenge a similar position for the spokesmen of our religious traditions who certainly would be in a position to maintain holiness in the land acclaimed for its holin

Considering all the remarks and hasty ju ments rendered in this all-important field must indeed agree with the Babylonian s who declared that nine-tenths of the wisd was vouchsafed unto Palestine and only c tenth for the rest of the world.

ABRAHAM A. KELL
Rabbi, Congregation, Brothers
Israel, Long Branch, N. J.

Rabbi Kellner's statement that the Rabbi cal Council "spoke only for those *rabban* that respect and accept traditional Rabbini authority" puts a different aspect on the act of the Rabbinical Council. Nobody challen its right to speak for its own membership a likeminded Jews. Our comment was based the report of that action in a JTA dispa dated Nov. 11, which was widely quoted in press. The dispatch reads: "The Rabbini Council of America has announced that st have been taken for recognizing the Ch Rabbinate of Israel *as the supreme author for all Jews*" (italics ours).

Our advocacy of the Hebrew University the principal symbol and instrument of Jew spiritual unity is based precisely on fact that it represents all aspects of our Je ish culture and therefore transcends the ic ological limits which Rabbi Kellner recogni as applying to the Chief Rabbinate. It is r fair to think of the University as an exc sively secularist institution. Its curriculum a its faculty reckon with the great religic classics of Judaism, but Judaism as a civiliz tion must embrace all Jewish cultural intere and its unity be expressed by an institutio that represents all of them.

EDITO

For a Rapprochement Between Reform and Conservative Seminaries

Sirs:

All of us here at the College, and I, particular, are very grateful for your enhea ening editorial in regard to our merger wi the Jewish Institute of Religion. I think th in many ways, the Reconstructionist mov ment and our forces within Reform Judais are working towards each other and towar a better organized, more active, and more sel respecting American Jewish community. TH understanding of our objectives which yc reveal is indeed very encouraging. Perha the next generation will see an informal not an actual merger of the Seminary an the greater College-Institute. Let us pray th both will indeed come to pass in God's goo time.

NELSON GLUECK,
President, Hebrew Union Colleg Jewish Institute of Religion.